

VZCZCXYZ0016  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSP #0295 1981644  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 171644Z JUL 09  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9938  
INFO RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC  
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 2665

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 000295

STATE FOR EEB/CBA WINSTEAD AND EEB/EX  
SANTO DOMINGO FOR FCS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [BEXP](#) [BTIO](#) [CVIS](#) [ABUD](#) [TD](#)  
SUBJECT: BFIF FY-09 PROJECTS IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

REF: (A) 09 STATE 071530

¶1. SUMMARY: Embassy Port of Spain thanks EEB/CBA for providing BFIF funding to improve Post's commercial training and outreach. To date in FY-09, Post used BFIF funding to allow the Political-Economic Officer and Economic Assistant to attend commercial training in Santo Domingo. Knowledge gained from training enabled the Economic Section to better promote Embassy commercial services and assist U.S. companies in Trinidad & Tobago, both at the Trade and Investment Convention (TIC) and in other fora. BFIF funding also allowed Embassy Port of Spain to hire additional manpower for the TIC in support of a more robust catalogue show. END SUMMARY.

-----  
PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES  
-----

¶2. The DOC - DOS MOU took effect in early 2009, extending Commercial services responsibilities to Post's Economic Section. In July 2009, Embassy Port of Spain's Political and Economic sections were combined, with the Economic Chief position being eliminated. The reduction of total staff members in the two combined sections will impact our ability to handle commercial services going forward.

¶3. Armed with knowledge about commercial services gained through the training in Santo Domingo, Pol-EconOff, together with the Econ Assistant, coordinated the U.S. Embassy booth at the 2009 TIC, the largest annual business-to-business event in Trinidad. In this extremely successful outreach exercise, the Political-Economic Section informed T&T and Caribbean businesses about the commercial services that the Embassy provides, answered numerous commercial inquiries, and expanded contacts among local firms already distributing U.S. products. At the booth, staff promoted the exports of several U.S. companies recruited with assistance from U.S. Export Assistance Centers and generated 49 export leads. BFIF funding enabled the Political-Economic Section to increase the level of coverage at TIC, expand the catalogue show, and follow up on each lead.

¶4. This year, The Embassy Public Affairs Section also participated in the TIC, promoting U.S. educational services and providing educational guidance to prospective students. The Educational Advisor delivered a presentation about studying abroad and fielded over 40 requests for information and assistance.

¶5. The TIC provided the Political-Economic Section with a valuable opportunity to interact with local and regional SMEs, to promote commercial services, and open new avenues for U.S. exports. Post will report on trade and investment resulting from the TIC as information becomes available. Participation in this event next year would enable more U.S. companies to take advantage of the opportunities that exist in T&T's leading regional economy.

-----  
EXPENDITURES  
-----

¶6. Final expenditure totals for these activities are as follows:

- AIRFARE & PER DIEM: \$3,238.24

- TIC related expenses: \$3,863.16

-----  
- TOTAL Expenditures: \$7,101.40

- REMAINING balance: \$ \$13,128.60

¶7. Post thanks Maria-Elena Portorreal from Commercial Service Santo Domingo and Sarah Hanson from Foreign Agricultural Service Miami for their assistance at the TIC, as well as Dennis Winstead in EEB/CBA for his unwavering support for Port of Spain's commercial programs.

Kusnitz